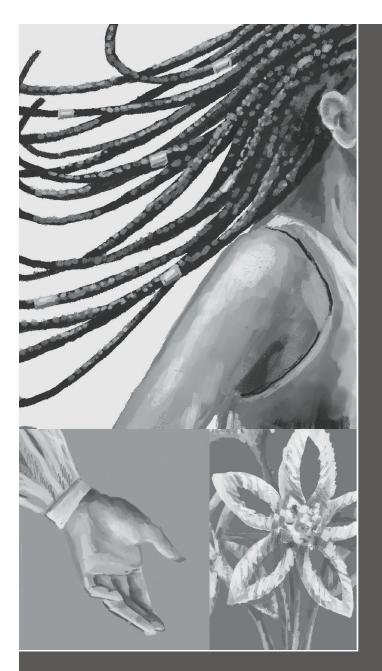
CONSIDERED SUICIDE / WHEN THE RAINBOW IS ENUF





Friday, February 21 – Friday, February 28, 2025 KAY THEATRE

AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

THEATRE DANCE

EMMA

Written by Jane Austen Adapted by Michael Bloom Directed by Lisa Murphy-Nathans **KAY THEATRE** OCTOBER 7-10, 2024

METAMORPHOSES

By Mary Zimmerman Directed by KenYatta Rogers KOGOD THEATRE NOVEMBER 15-22, 2024

for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf

By Ntozake Shange Co-directed by Fatima Quander and Ama Law **KAY THEATRE** FEBRUARY 21-28, 2025

HIP HOP ANANSI

By Eisa Davis Directed by Paige Hernandez **KOGOD THEATRE APRIL 18-26, 2025**

FALL M.F.A. THESIS DANCE CONCERT

Choreographed by Christina Collins, daniel miramontes and Peter Pattengill DANCE THEATRE OCTOBER 25-27, 2024

SPRING M.F.A. THESIS DANCE CONCERT

Choreographed by Kevin Clark, Mher Kandoyan and Kae Lawrence DANCE THEATRE FEBRUARY 14-16, 2025

UMOVES: UNDERGRADUATE DANCE CONCERT

DANCE THEATRE MAY 2-4, 2025

SCHOOL OF THEATRE, DANCE, AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES

for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf

By Ntozake Shange Directed by Fatima Quander and Ama Law

| Co-Director | Fatima Quander |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Co-Director | Ama Law |
| Dramaturg | Hudson White |
| Stage Manager | |
| Scenic Designer | |
| Costume Designer | Doni Rotunno |
| Lighting Designer | John Alexander |
| Sound Designer | |

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21 - FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2025 KAY THEATRE

Content Warnings: sexual assault, intimate partner violence, child abuse, abortion, racial slurs, homophobia, and death.

A Note on Hateful Language: for colored girls involves the use of racial and homophobic slurs used in realistic contexts. The production acknowledges the presence of these terms may be challenging for some audiences, however, the use of these terms is intentional by the production and the playwright. Hateful terminology is an unfortunate part of the experience of many minoritized communities, and it is important to include that part of reality in art in order to continue the conversation around how hateful terms are used and how they can be damaging.

Please take this opportunity to silence your cell phones, and anything else that might beep or buzz. Photography and audio or video recording are prohibited. And finally, please take note of the nearest exit from the venue in case of emergency.

CAST

| Lady in Brown | Alaina (AJ) Jenkins |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Lady in Yellow | |
| Lady in Purple | Nina-Abbie Omatsola |
| Lady in Red | |
| Lady in Green / Dance Captain | Toi Lyles |
| Lady in Blue | Kayla Harvey-Ali |
| Lady in Orange | |

UNDERSTUDIES

| Autumn Whetstone |
|-------------------------|
| Briana Bryant |
| Phoebe "Pheebs" Coleman |
| Faith McCullough |
| Erin Smith |
| Aïda Nyabingi |
| Lexie Jones |
| |

^{*}For the Feb 25 performance, Lady in Red will be played by Kayley Childs.

I write for young girls of color, for girls who don't even exist yet, so that there is something there for them when they arrive. I can only change how they live, not how they think. I want to say, 'Here, look where you can live, look what you can think.' I concentrate on giving this to young people because they are the treasures of black culture.

- Ntozake Shange

This quote serves as the center, nay, the anchor of our ever-expanding "inspiration wall." It started in rehearsal as a way to get our magical, peaceful, and loving cast thinking deeper, darker, brighter, higher in our collective exploration of the seven colorful ladies featured in Ntozake Shange's pivotal choreopoem for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf. It was their introduction.

Since then, our understanding of ourselves, our connectedness through Black womanhood and the deepening of our sisterhood has expanded beyond measure. we come together to listen and learn/to grow through our mistakes and vulnerabilities/to laugh LOUDLY/to cry/to sweat/to lean into each other/to be inspired by one another/and to dance unapologetically. we choose to have fun ON PURPOSE/and to lean on each other amidst the cold rainy days. And through this process, we've experienced every aspect of our rainbow: a maternal groundedness that is brown; a sultry pierce who is red; a fêteful, mango-sweet orange; a youthful and ever-growing yellow, an incomparable green, a survivor through our blue, and the mythical regality that is purple. These are our Ladies and these are our students.

You can't help it. An artist's duty, as far as I'm concerned, is to reflect the times.

- Nina Simone

And it's unfathomable that almost 50 years after its premiere, the topics/subject matter addressed in *for colored girls...* are just as prevalent. As an audience member, you will witness reflections inspired by Shange's life and experiences as an activist within the Black Arts Movement. And now, in 2025, we see these stories newly reflected in our young cast, reinforcing the timelessness of the work and the sad reality that these stories are still so relatable.

But through it all, we look to uplift joy. Black joy as resistance and Black joy as an active pursuit towards the betterment of us all. These student-artists are on a journey toward resiliency and elevated consciousness. We invite you to take this journey with them. We hope that what you witness will not only move you emotionally, but also serve as a call to action.

Because the rainbow is enuf...

- With peace and love, Ama and Fatima

Special thanks to Drew Okoye, Hudson White, Erin Sanders and Heather Hernandez and our amazing backstage crew. Thank you to the designers' dreams and folks in the shops who have worked so hard to materialize our vision.

Thank you to our guest artists: Nyla Law, Nia Law, Kaela Lawrence, daniel miramontes, and Alexandria Wailes.To our families for their patience with our late late nights; and of course, to the ancestors.

"it irked me that someone would think that women were not an adequate subject...

I was determined that we were going to be viable and legitimate literary figures"

- Ntozake Shange in Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory

Ntozake Shange didn't intend to write the play for colored girls who have considered suicide/ when the rainbow is enuf. She didn't actually intend to write a play at all. Shange identified as a performance poet and used her poetry to explore the experiences of Black women, drawing on her personal life and the lives of Black women around her. It was her sister, playwright Ifa Bayeza, that urged Shange to explore her poems as a staged production in 1975. In doing so, she created an entirely new form of theatrical performance: the choreopoem.¹

Shange coined the term "choreopoem" to reflect her work's unique blending of music, spoken word, and dance. As noted by Camille A. Brown, director of the 2022 Broadway revival of *for colored girls...*: "The dance is just as necessary as the text. They lived together – informing each other, fueling each other."²

Shange's for colored girls... is physicalized by seven Black women who share their stories through poetry more so than dialogue. Each poem offers a glimpse into their distinct journeys, yet many of the stories are also told collectively, thereby creating an opportunity to, as Shange puts it, "give the rainbow a human form." You won't find a singular plot, or characters with specific names and occupations, as you might expect from a theatrical play. The words dance between heightened, imagery-rich language that is expected of poetry-and more realistic and occasionally vulgar language that would be found in the "real world." Just as Black women are not able to escape the pressures of racism and misogyny, there is no sugar coating from Shange. Every word is intentional, even the use of the word "colored," which Shange purposefully chose to make her work more accessible for her grandmother. 4

Together these strategies allow the play to navigate through a number of challenging topics such as intimate partner violence, unfilled intimacy, and rape, as well as the theatricalization of life's joys such as graduation, building community, and the bonds of sisterhood. There are moments of intense pain, but also moments of catharsis, moments of joy, and everything in-between. Shange's intricately crafted poetry allows moments of vulnerability that feel almost too personal to be put on stage, and yet are universal enough to ring true for countless casts that have taken on this show for the last 49 years.

Staging an all-Black cast at a predominantly white institution doesn't happen everyday. Approaching this show as a Black man, I was deeply interested in the opportunity to consider source material that is rarely centered in mainstream theatre: the Black woman. Often, Black women's stories are ignored or left one-dimensional, denying their full humanity. But here, these Black women will be honored as thought-provoking, complex, and beautiful storytellers.

- Hudson White, dramaturg

¹Ntozake Shange, for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf (preface). 1975² Camille A. Brown, for colored girls... (introduction)

²Camille A. Brown, for colored girls... (introduction)

³Shange, for colored girls... (preface)

⁴Rushing, Andrea. "For Colored Girls, Suicide or Struggle," 1981

JOHN D. ALEXANDER (Lighting Design) OFF-BROADWAY: Lambs 2 Slaughter (Cherry Lane Theatre) and Migration: Reflections on Jacob Lawrence (New Victory Theater). Recent designs include: Sleepova (Olney Theatre Center); Confederates (Detroit Public Theatre); Sanctuary Road (Virginia Opera); Packages O'The Things We Carry (Nat'l Black Theatre) and Frozen (Red Mountain Theater). Other designs include: Selling Kabul (Signature Theatre); From the Mississippi Delta (Westport Country Playhouse); Crying on Television (Everyman Theatre); Quamino's Map (Chicago Opera Theatre); B.R.O.K.E.N. Code B.I.R.D. Switching (Berkshire Theatre Group); Sheepdog and The House of the Negro Insane (Contemporary American Theatre Festival). www.JohnDAlexanderLightingDesign.com

BRIANA BRYANT, (Lady in Yellow u/s), freshman theater and economics double major.

KAYLEY CHILDS, (Lady in Red), third-year family science and theater major. UMD credits: The Late Wedding (Kel, Interviewer, Casen, Stranger, Patron 2, M.Weatherby, Ali), Emma (Assistant Choreographer). Outside Credits: *A Wrinkle in Time* (Mrs. Whatsit), *The Wiz* (Poppy dancer, munchkin), *The Addams Family* (grandma u/s).

PHOEBE "PHEEBS" COLEMAN, (Lady in Purple u/s), sophomore theatre major. Previous Art Scholar. This is her first UMD show. Outside credits: *More Than A Dream* (Teen Tia) *The Lion King Jr*, Maryland Playhouse (Lioness, Gazelle), *Christmas in Black & White*, Woodstream Academy (Abby), VoiceOver: *Backpack Lily* (Alexis), Short Film: *I'm Ready* (Tina).

SAM CRAWFORD, (Sound designer), sound design faculty, co-director Maya Brin Institute for New Performance. UMD credits: *Men On Boats* (Sound Designer), *The Prom* (Sound Designer), *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* (Sound Designer), *Little Women* (Sound Designer). Outside credits: *Dear Lord, Make Me Beautiful*, Park Avenue Armory (Sound Designer); *truce songs*, Irondale (Composer, Instrumentalist); *Aroundtown*, BAM (Composer, Instrumentalist); *A(Way) Out of My Body*, Skirball Center NYU (Composer, Instrumentalist); *Angel Reapers*, Signature Theatre NYC (Co-Sound Designer); *Another Evening*: Venice, Venice Biennale (Composer, Sound Designer). Film credits: 32 Sounds (Headphone Experience Designer), La Medea (Composer, Librettist).

MEDHANIT (MEDI) DESTA, (Lady in Yellow), junior theatre and economics double major. She is grateful to be a part of this production and wants to thank everyone for supporting her. UMD Credits: *Are We At War Yet?* (F2 U/S), *Emma* (Mrs. Elton U/S).

ELIZABETH ENWOROM, (Lady in Orange), third-year theatre and performance major. UMD credits: *Men on Boats* (Seneca u/s) and *Metamorphoses* (Track Three u/s) Outside credits: *Sister Act* (pit/musician).

KAYLA HARVEY-ALI, (Lady in Blue), third-year theatre performance major and arts leadership minor. UMD Credits: *Metamorphoses* (track 2), *A Bicycle Country* (Inez u/s) Outside credits: *Working* (Kate & Roberta), *Antigone* (Eurydice & Chorus member), *Suburbia* (Sooze), *Ascension Day* (Faith).

HEATHER HERNANDEZ, (Assistant Stage Manager), theatre major. UMD Credits: FMFA '25 (SM), *Are We At War Yet?* (ASM). Outside credits: YPF '24 Baltimore Center Stage (SM), *Cinderella*, Art Centric/Baltimore Center Stage (Deck Carp), *We Could Be Heroes*, Howard Community College (SM).

ALAINA (AJ) JENKINS, (Lady in Brown), is a senior theater and performance major and is so excited to perform in her last production at the University of Maryland! Credits: *The Prom* (Shelby u/s Dee Dee), *In The Heights* (Ensemble), *Men on Boats* (O.G. Howland), and *Spring Awakening* (Anna).

LEXIE JONES, (Lady in Orange u/s), first-year theater major. Academy for the Fine Arts Alumni, Frederick County. *Les Misérables*, TJ Stage (Montparnasse), *Bayou don't Bow* Official Recording by Deacon Withers. *Beauty and the Beast*, TJ Stage (Ensemble), *Crazytown*, Academy for the Fine Arts (Jim Pickles).

AMA LAW, (Co-Director), Artist. Hip hop lover. DMV native. Ama Law is an African dancer at heart who explores intersectionality and loves to share knowledge. This MFA dance graduate is continuously teaching and learning through institutions like University of Maryland College Park (UMD), Bates Dance Festival and Dance Place. Ama is artistin-residence at UMD and most recently received a BroadwayWorld nomination for Best Choreographer of Constellation Theater's *IS GOD IS*. Ama is co-director of Project ChArma, a project-based dance theater company dedicated to using art as activism. They premiered *Chronicles of Nina... What now?* at the Kennedy Center in April 2024.

TOI LYLES, (Lady in Green / Dance Captain), second-year dance major. Gemstone Scholar. UMD credits: Faculty Dance Concert (Understudy).

AÏDA NYABINGI, (Lady in Blue u/s), sophomore theatre performance and anthropology double major and Honors Humanities student. UMD credits: *Men on Boats* (OG and Jonhson u/s), *Emma* (Jane Fairfax). Outside credits: *The Addams Family* (Wednesday u/s).

DREW OKOYE, (Assistant Director), junior theatre performance and psychology double major. Creative and Performing Arts Scholar. UMD credits: *Emma* (Emma), *Men on Boats* (Old Shady), *The Prom* (Kaylee, u/s Trent), etc. Outside credits: *The Addams Family* (Morticia, u/s Gomez), etc.

SOFIA OLIVAR, (Scenic Designer), born and raised in Mexico City, Sofía is in her third and final year as a Scenic Design MFA student at UMD. Previous work experience includes show set design at Universal Creative and exhibition design at the Smithsonian Institution. UMD credits: *A Bicycle Country* (Scenic designer). Outside credits: *Damn Things Will Kill Ya* (Scenic designer, American University), *It Happened in Key West* (Assistant scenic designer, Fulton Theatre).

NINA-ABBIE OMATSOLA, (Lady in Purple), junior psychology and theatre performance double major. UMD Credits: *Metamorphoses* (Actor 3), *Men on Boats* (Bradley u/s), Outside credits: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Titania).

FATIMA QUANDER, (Co-Director), is a Lecturer of Acting for Live Digital Performance. Here at TDPS, she directed *A Bicycle Country* by Nilo Cruz and *The Book Club Play* by Karen Zacarías. Recent performance credits include: *Covenant* (Theater Alliance); *Letters to Kamala/Dandelion Peace* (Voices Festival Productions); *The American Five* (First Look at Ford's Theatre); and *Julius X* (Reading Room at Folger). She has also performed with FRESHH Inc. Theatre Company; DC Hip-Hop Theatre Festival; Rep Stage; Everyman Theatre; Theater of the First Amendment; Folger Theatre; Imagination Stage; Discovery Theater; and The Kennedy Center (in house and on National tour). Fatima also works as a teaching artist with a number of theatres and programs throughout DC and Baltimore.

DONI ROTUNNO, (Costume Designer), second-year M.F.A Costume Design Candidate. UMD credits: *Emma* (Costume Designer), *Are We At War Yet?* (Costume Designer). Outside Credits: *In the Heights*, Signature Theater (Assistant Costume Designer), *Seven Deadly Sins*, Wolf Trap Opera (Assistant Costume Designer), *Hester Street*, Theater J (Assistant Wig Designer), *Orpheus and Eurydice*, Carolina Ballet (Makeup Designer).

ERIN SANDERS, (Stage Manager), is a senior theatre major with a concentration in stage management/ lighting design. UMD Credits: *Metamorphoses* (ASM), *Men on Boats* (SM). Outside Credits: *Discus* (Sound Designer), *Alice By Heart* (SM), *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (SM). Upcoming: *Hip Hop Anansi* (Asst. Lighting Designer), *Sound of Music* (Co-Lighting Designer).

ERIN SMITH, (Lady in Green u/s), sophomore sociology major and anti-Black racism minor. College Park Scholars: Justice and Legal Thought.

AUTUMN WHETSTONE, (Lady in Brown u/s), sophomore theatre major, University of Maryland. Outside credits: Director of Trapped Minds (short film), acting role in The Nest (short film), final placement (stage production) DESA/Studio theatre DC, *African School Girls* (stage production) DESA/Studio theatre DC. Outside training: British Academy of Dramatic Arts, Levine School of Music (Classical Piano).

HUDSON WHITE, (Dramaturg), is a senior theatre performance major. Credits include: *Metamorphoses*, UMD (Assistant Dramaturg); *Emma*, UMD (Frank Churchill); *Men With Podcasts*, UMD (Ozzi); *Are We At War Yet?*, UMD (Assistant Director, Dramaturg); *John Proctor is the Villain*, UMD Ghostlight (Dramaturg); *The Color of Guilt*, Howard Players (Director); *Seven Guitars*, Howard University (Set Crew Chief); *She Kills Monsters*, Howard Players (Lighting Designer); *Heathers*, Howard University (Set Crew Chief).

| ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, DESIGNERS AND STAGE MANAGERS Assistant Director |
|--|
| Assistant Stage Manager Heather Hernandez |
| PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT |
| Assistant Director of Production and Operations Jennifer Schwartz |
| Production and Operations Coordinator |
| |
| PRODUCTION |
| SCENIC Table in a Discourse Michael Deinasse |
| Technical DirectorMichael Driggers Scene Shop CoordinatorReuven Goren |
| Lead CarpenterEarl Browne |
| Technical Coordinators |
| Carpenters Hannah Belman, Ebou Dibba, Abby Feinstein, Ella Gammel, |
| Danielle Juaregui, Maura Martin, Terence Ngwafor, Lurr Ragen, Harsh Senjaliya |
| Carpenter Graduate Students Amir Mahdavi, David Wilson |
| Student Carpenters Kyle Wasserman |
| SCENIC PAINTING |
| Scenic Charge CoordinatorAnn Chismar |
| Scenic Charge PainterFred Via |
| Scenic Artist |
| Student Scenic ArtistsMars Burggraf, Kayla Harvey-Ali, Layla Nordrum, Hudson White |
| PROPS |
| Prop Shop ManagerTimothy Jones |
| Prop Shop ArtisanPaige Stone |
| Prop Shop Student ArtisansAdam Hawley, Charlotte "C" Macko |
| TDPS479 StudentsTimia Snow |
| VENUE OPERATIONS |
| Stage Crew LeadsSteven Bronocco, Alexix Hayes, Cole Owens |
| TECHNOLOGY |
| Technology Shop ManagerJeffrey Reckeweg |
| LIGHTING |
| Lighting Coordinator |
| Technology Shop TechnicianCameron Smith |
| Assistant Lighting SupervisorLiza Raney |
| Lead ElectriciansBuruk Daniel, Christian Henrriquez, Courtney Naughton, |
| Emily Pan, Hanna Zakharenko, J. Royal Miller, James Newman, |
| Jasmine Voon, Kiefer Cure, Malory Hartman, Max Abramovitz |
| Student Electricians Aïda Shakuur Nyabingi, Alana Isaac, Amelia Talbot, Danny Mallya, Drew Okoye, Ebou Dibba, Emma Meisel, Erin Sanders, Gabi Loshin, |
| Hannah Kelly, Jaylyn Manu, Jeffrey Beamer, Johnny Kraft, Kyle Gunter, |
| Mariah Faulkner, Melissa Szwed, Sonia Thanicatt, William Zhao, Yannick Godts |
| PROJECTIONS |
| |

Projections Coordinator.....Zachary Rupp

AUDIO

| Assistant Manager of Audio | James O'Connell |
|----------------------------|---|
| Audio Supervisor | Phoenix Sweeney |
| Audio Technicians | Evan Thanicatt, Jake Goldstein, Mark Lyons, Kiefer Cure |
| Student Audio Crew | Jack Campbell |
| | |
| COSTUMES | |
| Costume Shop Manager | Jen Daszczyszak |
| Assistant Costume Shop Ma | nager and CraftsLisa Burgess |
| | Tessa Lew |
| | |

| Costume Shop Manager | Jen Daszczyszak |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Assistant Costume Shop Manager | and CraftsLisa Burgess |
| Costume Tailor and Draper | Tessa Lew |
| Costume Drapers | MJ Hromek, Steven Simon |
| First Hand | Dennis Kitmore |
| Costume Graduate Assistant | Bailey Bower, Addison Littlefield |
| Costume Technicians | Brooke Baney, Ilana Mongilio, Layla Nordrum |
| Costume Student Crew | Caroline Bailey, Emma Meisel, Wendy Saltsberg, |
| | Medhanit Desta, Silmarian Grinath, Carly Ruderman |

SHOW CREW

| Wardrobe Crew Head | Wendy Walker |
|--------------------|--|
| | Kevin Volland |
| = | Miele Murray |
| | Julia Smith |
| | Immran Barry, Sophia Patzkowski, Simonia Tafah |
| | Sophie Bagheri, Heidi Lehan |

SCHOOL OF THEATRE, DANCE, AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES

DIRECTOR, SCHOOL OF THEATRE, DANCE, & PERFORMANCE STUDIES Jill Bradbury

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Angela Smith
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Melissa Sturges
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Sophia Tepermeister
Connor Voss
Zoe Walders
Caitlin Woods

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